



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Navy Divers Recover Remains of Missing Pilot

NORFOLK, Va. – Navy Divers searching the wreckage of the MH-53E “Sea Dragon” recovered the remains of missing pilot, Lt. Sean Christopher Snyder, earlier today.

Divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 2, operating aboard USNS Grasp (T-ARS-51), located the aircraft’s cockpit late Monday using a remotely operated vehicle and confirmed the presence of remains in the wreckage.

Salvage operations were suspended late Monday evening due to deteriorating weather conditions. USNS Grasp resumed recovery efforts early Tuesday morning.

Snyder, 39, assigned to Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron (HM) 14, went missing when his MH-53E “Sea Dragon” crashed off the coast of Virginia Beach while conducting routine mine countermeasure training.

Five crewmembers were on board the MH-53E when it crashed Jan. 8, approximately 18 miles off the coast of Virginia Beach. Four of the crew members were rescued and taken to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital for treatment. Two crewmembers died at the hospital from their injuries. The two other rescued crewmembers have been released from the hospital.

A memorial service for the three crewmembers killed in the crash is being planned for Friday at Naval Station Norfolk.

The cause of the crash is being investigated.

The Snyder family has released the following statement:

Divers have recovered the remains of Lt. Sean Snyder. The family is truly thankful to the men and women of the United States Navy. Sean was a man of honor and a true hero, not only to his country, but also to his wife, children, family, and friends. Our strength and trust remain in Christ.

-USFF-

Note to media organizations: It is the family's wish for privacy, and we will not be conducting any interviews or issuing further statements at this time.